

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 INR-07 CIAE-00 /040 W

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R 181515Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7689

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 13079

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, GW, WB

SUBJECT: SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR EXCHANGE OF TELEGRAMS ON QA ANNIVERSARY

REF: (A) STATE 204050, (B) BONN 13394, (C) BONN 13009

1. FROM MOSCOW PERSPECTIVE WE SEE ADVANTAGES OF QA ANNIVERSARY EXCHANGE IN MUCH SAME LIGHT AS DEPARTMENT (REF A). CONSEQUENTLY, IF BONN GROUP CONSENSUS DEVELOPS AGAINST EXCHANGE, WE ALSO SEE SOME VALUE IN BREAKING THE NEWS TO THE SOVIETS IN A WAY WHICH SETS THEM DOWN GENTLY (AND MAY ALSO SERVE TO BRING THE FRENCH GENTLY AWAY FROM THEIR INITIAL PREFERENCE FOR AN EXCHANGE).

2. AS WE SEE IT, MESSAGE COULD BE DELIVERED IN FOUR WAYS:

(1) WITHOUT A RATIONALE OR WITH STATEMENT THAT TIMING IS INOPPORTUNE WHICH WOULD AMOUNT TO THE SAME THING; (2) WITH REFERENCE TO THE FRG ELECTION CAMPAIGN; (3) WITH REFERENCE TO THE PRESENT ATMOSPHERE ALONG THE FRG-GDR BORDER, AND IN PARTICULAR TO THE AUG 13 TRAFFIC ROUTE OBSTRUCTION; (4) ANY OF THE ABOVE, BUT WITH THE ADDITIONAL COMMENT THAT WE WOULD HOPE TO RETURN TO THE MATTER ON THE OCCASION OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE QA'S ENTRY INTO FORCE, SINCE THIS, RATHER THAN SIGNATURE,

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IS THE DATE WHICH MOST ADEQUATELY REGISTERS THE QA'S

ACHIEVEMENTS FOR OUR PUBLICS.

3. AT THIS DISTANCE, WE ARE UNABLE TO OFFER SOUND JUDGMENTS AS TO THE PROS AND CONS OF EACH OPTION. REFUSING THE SOVIET PROPOSAL WITHOUT A REAL OR ANY RATIONALE WOULD LEAVE THE SOVIETS TO DRAW THEIR OWN CONCLUSIONS, SINCE THE PROPOSAL IS ALREADY IN THE PRESS, IT IS LIKELY THEY WOULD CONCLUDE THAT THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN IS A MAJOR FACTOR, WHETHER IT IS MENTIONED EXPLICITLY OR NOT. THERE WOULD THEREFORE APPEAR TO BE LITTLE REAL ADVANTAGE TO OVERRIDING FRG OBJECTIONS TO CITATION OF THE ELECTION AS GROUNDS FOR REFUSAL. CITING THE BORDER SITUATION, ON THE OTHER HAND, WOULD SHIFT THE BLAME FOR NO EXCHANGE OVER TO SOVIETS AND MAKE CLEAR THAT THERE IS A PRICE TO BE PAID FOR SUCH OBSTRUCTION, BEYOND SIMPLE PROTEST, WHEN THE SOVIETS ARE DEMANDEURS ON OTHER MATTERS. AT SAME TIME, BY MULTIPLYING THE IMPACT OF THE REFUSAL IT COULD ALSO PROVOKE EXAGGERATED SUSPICION AND EVEN AN EXAGGERATED REACTION, IN WHICH THE BENEFIT OF THE OBJECT LESSOR WOULD BE BURIED. IN ANY EVENT, RESORT TO THE FOURTH OPTION--AN OFFER TO RETURN TO THE MATTER ON THE "REAL" ANNIVERSARY IN THE SPRING, AFTER THE ELECTION IS OVER AND CURRENT PASSIONS ON BOTH SIDES HAVE ABATED-- WOULD MEAN A REPLY OF LESS THAN A FLAT NO, AND MIGHT DO MUCH TO AVOID A SOVIET UNILATERAL STATEMENT WHICH WE WOULD LIKE TO AVOID.

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## Message Attributes

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